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DECISION OF 19 JANUARY 1956 ON THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF SPRING TILLING AND CULTIVATION PROGRAM IN THE GDR

[Comment: The following report presents the full text of the decision on spring cultivation in the GDR, as published in the 30 January 1956 issue of Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Part I, an irregular publication of the Office of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, in Berlin.]

The 25th meeting of the Central Committee of the SED and the Fourth LPG (Agricultural Producer Cooperative) Conference have set great tasks for all cooperative and private farmers, tractor operators, and other agricultural workers during the first year of the Second Five-Year Plan.

Socialist economic principles are to be further strengthened, and LPGs are to put forth added efforts to recruit private farmers, especially middle farmers. The mechanization of agricultural work is to be improved and expanded.

In 1956, average grain yields are to increase to at least 2,670 kilograms per hectare, potato yields to 20,000 kilograms per hectare, and sugar beet yields to 32,500 kilograms per hectare. In addition, corn is to be cultivated on at least 200,000 hectares and catch crop acreage is to increase to cover 26 percent of the agricultural land area. In achieving these yields, it is necessary to profit from the experience of the past year, when economic plan goals were not met in several crops, including potatoes, beets, and vegetables.

The chief shortcomings were insufficient political and ideological work in encouraging all workers to support the plan, the inadequate use of progressive agrarian methods and scientific knowledge, the inefficient use of machinery, and lack of mechanization in cultivation.

Numerous state offices did not sufficiently concern themselves with LPG development, restricted themselves to administrative direction, and failed to encourage the initiative and individual responsibility of the MTS, the VEG (people-owned farms), tractor operators, cooperative and private farmers.

The experiences of a large number of MTS, VEGs, LPGs, and private farmers show that the proposed production goals can not only be reached, but surpassed. It will be necessary, however, to make widespread use of innovator methods and scientific knowledge, to use machinery and implements efficiently and in continuous operation, and to organize work in socialist enterprises according to socialist principles, especially by applying the "Schoenebeck" Method in all MTS tractor brigades and LPG field brigades.

As a result of the Third SED Party Congress numerous MTS, VEGs, LPGs, and private farmers have pledged to fulfill and exceed the economic plan.

It is the task of state offices, in close collaboration with National Front, party, and mass organization committees, to develop widespread competitive movements, in order to increase production. Additional labor to support the agricultural program is to be recruited from villages and towns. The following are the main points of the new program:

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I. Main Tasks of State Offices

1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, as well as Bezirk, Kreis, and village councils are responsible for the guidance, support, and control of spring planting and cultivation work performed by MTS, LPGs, VEGs, OeLBs (local agricultural enterprises), and private farms and for ensuring that each hectare of usable agricultural land is cultivated.

2. The Bezirk, Kreis, and village councils shall concentrate their main efforts on the political and organizational preparation for spring planting and cultivation work.

Bezirk and Kreis councils have until 15 February 1956 to conclude plans for controlling spring tilling and cultivation work; the councils are further responsible for regularly checking on adherence to the plans.

3. The personal responsibility of MTS, VEG managements and LPG chiefs for the preparation and execution of individual operations is to be rescinded. MTS, VEG, and LPG work will be directed mainly through instruction within the enterprise and/or village itself. Instructors are to be appointed by Bezirk and Kreis councils for periods of several weeks in MTS areas.

Kreis council meetings with MTS and VEG directors are to be restricted to a minimum.

4. VEG and MTS managements, as well as village councils and LPG committees, are to conclude a work plan for spring tilling and cultivation by 15 February 1956 on the basis of the economic plan and involving widespread worker participation. In this connection, defects of the 1955 spring cultivation work are to be avoided.

5. MTS directors shall submit work plans to MTS councils for consultation and approval. Work plans for LPGs, OeLBs, and villages are to be coordinated by MTS managements. MTS and VEG work plans should contain the following key points:

a. Organization of work according to continuous operational methods, the most advantageous agronomical schedules, and the most efficient use of machinery and implements in two shifts.

b. Assurance of necessary manpower, especially for cultivation work.

c. Assurance of rapid repair work and maintenance of machinery and implements in a usable status.

d. Mutual exchange of seed and planting material.

e. Widespread use of innovator methods and scientific knowledge.

f. Early and careful crop cultivation, especially beet and turnip thinning and pest control in all areas.

g. Improvement of the animal feed supply by introducing the "Green Fodder Belt" system in all agricultural enterprises, the fulfillment and over-fulfillment of corn, catch crop, and especially interplanted crop quotas; the organization of forage crop seed production in agricultural enterprises.

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h. Intensive cultivation of all grassland, reclamation and improvement of rotation pastures and of pasture land used intensively [i.e., apportioned so that each animal receives maximum feeding], clearing of the entire inland drainage system through formation of land improvement cooperatives and work groups under the VdgB (BHG) [Farmers' Mutual Aid Association (Farmers' Trade Cooperative)].

i. Development of competitions within MTS, VEGs, and LPGs, as well as throughout all agricultural enterprises.

7. Kreis council officials and mayors are responsible for recruiting agricultural labor from local sources, especially employable family members of cooperative farmers, as well as pensioners, housewives, and youths, to supplement the regular agricultural labor force.

Kreis and village councils are responsible for directing and supporting MTS, LPG, VEG, and OeLB work in the organization of shift work to cover the entire day.

8. Additional workers from cities and industrial enterprises are to be used only after all local manpower reserves have been exploited. The financing of additional labor from cities and industry will be regulated by special directive.

9. Local people's representatives and their standing commissions, the House and Farm Groups of the National Front, the DFD (Service for Germany) ["voluntary" labor force], the trade unions, and the FDJ are requested to help set up day nurseries with local funds, to establish youth brigades, etc.

II. TASKS OF THE MTS

1. For political and technical training of MTS cadres and of auxiliary personnel, the winter school program according to the central plan is to be carried out by 11 February 1956.

Sufficient shift tractor operators, recruited from LPGs and from among private farmers, are to be trained to ensure the fullest utilization of MTS capacity. Contracts with all shift tractor operators, specifying exact work periods, are to be concluded by 1 March 1956.

2. MTS directors are responsible for seeing that all LPGs in their areas carry out field work for 1956, in accordance with the resolutions of the Fourth LPG Conference. MTS directors, in collaboration with the governing committee of LPGs which are operating in arrears, are to work out a program for the economic improvement of the LPG by 29 February 1956.

3. MTS directors have until 1 February 1956 to set up permanent tractor brigades and outline their work.

4. MTS directors are responsible for concluding contracts for the entire year with LPGs, OeLBs, permanent work groups, and other agricultural enterprises by 15 February 1956. Contracts with permanent work groups are to take the form of collective contracts. Pledges to use innovator methods are to be emphasized.

5. Annual work contracts between MTS and LPGs are to be personally concluded by the MTS director, after authorization through the LPG membership meetings.

The signing of work contracts with permanent work groups is to take place in the presence of all member farmers of such groups.

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6. MTS directors are responsible for seeing to it that the machine repair program is carried out by 15 February 1956, and that the rapid repair method is used in all MTS.

7. MTS directors are responsible for initiating the "Schoenebeck" work method in all brigades. By 29 February 1956, MTS contractual work plans, including plans of costs, etc., are to be worked out on the level of the individual brigade and tractor operators.

MTS brigades are to conclude competitive contracts with field brigades according to the "Schoenebeck" principle and establish work plans for each tractor brigade.

8. With the beginning of 1956 field work, MTS directors and chief bookkeepers are to exercise strict control over fulfillment of work contracts, in volume and quality, and adherence to plans for lowering production costs.

9. MTS chief agronomists, brigade agronomists, and plant protection technicians are responsible for employing the best means of planting and cultivating, so that planned yields will be reached or even surpassed.

They are also to see that:

a. All LPGs complete their long-range, production, and yearly work plans on time.

b. LPG work is organized in field brigades and is coordinated with the work plans of tractor brigades on the basis of the "Schoenebeck" method.

c. The latest scientific knowledge and innovator methods are imparted to all LPGs and thence to private farmers, with the purpose of applying these methods to large areas.

d. A sufficient feed supply exists on all LPGs and private farms through the introduction of the "Green Fodder Belt" system.

e. The basis for highly productive quality seed production is created in all seed development areas through good and careful planting, cultivation, etc.

10. Chief agronomists and chief zoologists in MTS are to organize at least one meeting for exchanging experiences on new and scientific methods with cooperative and private farmers at least once a month in every MTS and in every brigade area.

During such meetings, the following innovator methods are to be discussed:

a. Germination of summer grain, as well as narrow-row and cross seeding methods:

b. Check-row planting, as applied especially to potatoes, corn, and various kinds of vegetables.

c. Germination of seed potatoes.

d. Use of granulated superphosphate fertilizers, as well as late application of nitrogenous fertilizers.

e. Increased feed supply through cultivation of corn, sunflowers, and other forage crops as a second crop or catch crop; harvest and ensilage of green fodder.

f. Application of the "Schoenebeck" method and c. the continuous operation system as a basis for the fullest use of machinery and increased labor productivity.

g. New methods in the maintenance and feeding of cattle;

During the growing season, discussions are to be supplemented by field trips.

Agronomists, zoologists, and plant protection technicians are to prepare evaluation reports on the results on innovator methods; they are also to give agricultural workers their fullest support in developing new methods.

III. TASKS OF THE VEGs

1. To fulfill and, if possible, surpass production plans, especially the seed development plans, VEG directors are to work out brigade plans with all brigade members immediately after state plan tasks have been distributed. The basis for this is the directive on the evaluation of brigade plans, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Main Administration of VEGs.

Brigade plans are to be discussed and concluded in brigade meetings, so that each brigade member can fully contribute towards achieving the goals established on the basis of production and financial figures.

2. In every VEG a work plan is to be set up on the basis of the system of continuous operation, in which the following is to be precisely established:

- a. The number of days needed to seed and cultivate each crop on the basis of shift work norms.
- b. The machines, implements, fertilizer, etc., available for raising production and how these are to be fully used.
- c. Procurement of seed and planting material.
- d. Daily work norms for each brigade member.
- e. The names of tractor operators and the specific tractors which are to work the second shift.
- f. Recruitment of VEG members, who are not regularly employed, to personally maintain root crop cultivation areas.
- g. The financial means available for carrying out spring tilling and cultivation.

3. VEG directors are responsible for seeing that all machinery is repaired and ready for use on the day specified.

4. VEG directors are to ensure the availability of sufficient seed supplies by the day of preparation. If seed supplies are inadequate, additional quantities are to be procured through mutual exchange between VEGs, with the support of Bezirk and Kreis councils.

5. Selection brigades are to be formed and trained in all VEGs by 30 April 1956 for the potato propagation program.

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6. All VEG seed development directors are to ensure careful preparation of seed development areas by making an adequate machine and labor supply available.

7. VEG directors are responsible for ensuring the obligatory application of (a) narrow-row and cross-row seeding methods, and (b) potato germination.

In addition, the following innovator methods are to be applied as widely as possible:

- a. Check-row planting of potatoes and corn to be ripened for grain.
- b. Germination of summer grain.
- c. Use of granulated superphosphate, "Nasskopf," and nitrogen late-season fertilizers.
- d. Sowing of single-germ or ground sugar and fodder beet seeds.
- e. Use of hormone preparations for weed control.
- f. Use of milk and wax ripe corn.

8. Through widespread brigade and individual competitions, as well as excellent work organization in tractor and field brigades, VEGs are to complete spring tilling first and set an example for the remainder of the agricultural sector.

9. The agriculture and forestry trade unions are to mobilize workers in an effort to attain VEG profitability.

IV. TASKS IN LPGs

1. LPG committees are to see to it that production plans and yearly production quotas are worked out by 15 February 1956, that they are decided upon at membership meetings, and submitted to Kreis councils for authorization.

2. Work plans on the basis of yearly production quotas are to be worked out by LPG field brigades in collaboration with MTS agronomists, brigade chiefs, all LPG brigade members, and the best MTS tractor operators. To ensure obligatory application of the continuous operation system, the LPG and MTS machines, implements, etc., which are to be used at definite periods on LPG fields are to be determined, as well as the brigade members which are to be assigned to MTS as shift tractor operators or service personnel. Further to be decided upon, on the basis of field brigade quotas, is the number of members, their families, and seasonal labor to be recruited from local labor reserves.

3. To ensure smooth operation, the committee, field brigades, MTS agronomists and brigade chiefs are to hold regular work discussions.

4. The LPG governing committees and control commissions are to see that the necessary quantities of seed and planting material are available on the day of preparation. If seed supplies are inadequate, LPGs, with the support of Bezirk and Kreis councils, are to initiate early exchanges with other LPGs.

5. Field brigade and individual competitions within and between LPGs are to be organized on the basis of the "Schonebeck" method.

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V. ORGANIZATION OF PERMANENT WORK GROUPS OF PRIVATE FARMERS

1. The formation of permanent work groups is an important step in the efficient use of modern MTS machinery and in improved work organization to increase per-hectare yields. Permanent work groups create better working and living conditions for the private farmer. MTS, Kreis, and village councils, in cooperation with the VdgB (BHG), are to stress the formation of further permanent work groups during the 1956 spring tilling.
2. Kreis and village councils and MTS, in cooperation with local VdgB (BHG) committees are to organize, guide, and support permanent work groups.
 MTS are to conclude collective work contracts with such groups; these contracts are to be included in a plan for the community which will ensure systematic use of MTS machinery. Planting and cultivation work of permanent work groups is to be laid down in community work plans.
3. The German Trade Enterprises for Seed (Deutsche Saatgut-Handelsbetriebe) are to conclude collective propagation contracts with permanent work groups and to support these groups through seed development advisers.
4. MTS agronomists are to guide and advise work groups in organizing cooperative field work.

VI. PROCUREMENT OF SEED AND PLANTING MATERIAL

1. Each farmer, LPG committee, VEG director, OeLB head, and managers of other agricultural and horticultural areas are responsible for procuring seed for all cultivated areas to meet cultivation plans.
2. Officials of Bezirk and Kreis councils, as well as mayors, in cooperation with Bezirk, Kreis, and local committees of the VdgB (BHG) are to take measures to ensure adequate seed procurement through mutual exchange for all VEGs, LPGs, OeLBs, and other agricultural enterprises in their respective areas.
3. Agricultural sections of Bezirk and Kreis councils, as well as Bezirk administrations and Kreis offices of the German Trade Center for Seed (Deutsche Saatgut - Handelszentrale), and the VdgB (BHG) are responsible for seeing that grain and oil crop seeds are delivered to authorized persons for propagation by the day of preparation.
 The transportation and delivery of early planting potatoes for propagation is to take place by 30 March, that of mid-season potatoes by 15 April, and delivery of late potatoes by 20 April. Grain seed and planting potatoes are to be delivered only if consumer goods are given in return.
4. Bezirk, Kreis, and village councils are responsible for the fulfillment of seed development, delivery, and distribution plans for all crops in their area. They are to guide and control the branches of the German Trade Center for Seed in the execution of their tasks.

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5. The seed development advisers of the German Trade Center for Seed, with MTS agronomists, are to examine the propagation areas, especially root and forage crop areas, at least twice before the official field examination is made; and to decide on necessary corrective measures in agreement with propagation enterprises.

6. All seed propagators, MTS agronomists, and plant protection technicians are to test regularly the temperature and quality of seed potato and beet cutting stores, so that losses will be avoided. Surplus cuttings and seed potatoes may not be used for feed; such surpluses are to be reported to the Kreis offices of the German Trade Center for Seed.

7. To achieve good seed corn yields in 1956 it is necessary that seed corn, which is to be harvested for grain, be distributed to farmers at least by 15 April 1956 by the Trade Center for Seed and the VdgB (BHG). MTS agronomists and seed development advisers of the Trade Center for Seed are to see that sowing and cultivation work takes place at the most favorable time.

VII. INCREASED POTATO YIELDS

1. A deciding factor in increasing potato yields is the germination of all seed potatoes. MTS agronomists, in cooperation with the VdgB (BHG), are to advise all LPG and private farmers on the application of this method.

2. On the basis of successful experiences in 1955, the check-row planting method for potatoes is to be used on large areas. MTS directors are to ensure that:

a. Machines and implements suitable for check-row planting are ready for use on the day of preparation and that service personnel are trained, so that high-quality work will be ensured.

b. The number of hectares to be planted according to the check-row method is determined for all LPGs, OeLBs, and private farms of each village in each MTS area.

c. The potatoes to be planted in this fashion also will be cultivated in this manner.

3. MTS plant protection technicians shall spray against potato rot (phytophthora) in endangered areas, especially where early potatoes and seed potatoes are planted. Contracts for pest control are to be concluded with individual agricultural enterprises. MTS technicians are also to make available implements and insecticides for pest and disease control.

VIII. INCREASED SUGAR BEET YIELDS

1. Sugar beet sowing is to be completed by 10 May 1956 at the latest.

2. To lighten the work, sowing is to take place in several stages and cross-row cultivation by machine is to be introduced as far as possible. All beet fields are to be hoed and thinned at the proper time.

3. In all VEGs and LPGs, efforts are to be made to encourage LPG members, agricultural workers, and families of such who are not regularly employed, to undertake personal maintenance of a fixed portion of the cultivated area. MTS and VEG directors are to see that necessary hoeing is done at the most appropriate times. They are to ensure that in case of need, all suitable pest control equipment be made available for combating beet pests.

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The Kreis offices for agricultural needs and the BHG are responsible for providing an adequate supply of chemical insecticides.

IX. INCREASED VEGETABLE AND FRUIT PRODUCTION

1. Bezirk and Kreis councils are responsible for making preparations for large-scale vegetable cultivation in suitable LPGs and permanent work groups of private farmers. They are also to organize cultivation work groups for the cultivation of crops to be planted and cared for with technical machinery on large areas.
2. Kreis and village councils, in collaboration with commissions of experts of the VdgB (BHG) are to see that cultivation quotas for greenhouse and field vegetables are adhered to, especially that part of the plan which legally establishes the minimum area to be cultivated.
3. To ensure cultivation of all vegetable fields, all vegetable growers who do not cultivate young plants themselves must conclude by 15 February 1956, delivery contracts with enterprises that provide such plants. Mayors, as well as agricultural departments of Kreis councils, are to control the procurement of young plants.
4. To raise vegetable production, Kreis and village councils, in collaboration with MTS and VdgB (BHG) commissions, are to organize the cultivation of such crops as kohlrabi, lettuce, carrots onions, the planting of between-season vegetables, and the planting of young white and red cabbage, savoy cabbage, and cauliflower plants for hothouse wintering.
5. In view of the unfortunate experiences in onion cultivation last year, Kreis councils are to take steps to ensure high yields in onion production this year.

The incrustation method is to be used in combating onion flies. MTS plant protection technicians are to make preparations in all BHGs, LPGs, and other institutions for the implementation of this method.
6. To ensure increased yields and higher quality fruit, soil preparation and fertilization, as well as spraying (two to three times) is to be undertaken with MTS assistance in all socialist and private fruit-growing areas.

X. INCREASED CORN ACREAGE

1. A significant factor in increasing animal feed supplies is the increased cultivation of corn in 1956. All LPG and private enterprises are requested to cultivate corn to milk or wax ripeness in a portion of the between-season crop area and in other suitable areas.
2. MTS shall examine their corn seeding facilities and, if necessary, exchange equipment with other MTS. MTS are to fulfill special agreements on corn seeding, cultivation, and harvesting to guarantee satisfactory work.

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XI. DAY OF PREPARATION

1. To examine spring tilling preparations, a day of preparation will be designated for 25 and 26 February 1956 in MTS, VEGs, LPGs, OeLBs, villages, German Trade Enterprises for Seed, and VdgB (BHG)s.

Commissions [for this purpose], to be formed from Bezirk, Kreis, and village councils are to consist of the following:

For MTS and VEGs

One member of the Bezirk or Kreis council as chairman

One representative of the agricultural department of the Bezirk council

MTS or VEG director (as the case may be)

Chairman of the Enterprise Trade Union Council, as well as activists and outstanding workers from the enterprise

MTS or VEG SED secretary

LPG and VdgB (BHG) officials in the particular area

For the LPG

A representative of the Kreis council as chairman

The LPG governing committee

Chairman of the control commission

A VdgB (BHG) representative from the particular village

A representative from the MTS management

The mayor of the particular village

For the villages, German Trade Enterprises for Seed, OeLBs, and VdgB (BHG)s

A representative of the Kreis council or the VdgB (BHG) Kreis committee as chairman

Mayor

The local VdgB (BHG) committee

A member of the LPG governing committee

The OeLB German Trade Enterprise for Seed or VdgB (BHG) manager;

An official of the particular Enterprise Trade Union Council or a village representative of the local agriculture and forestry trade union

Two members of the agricultural committee

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2. The officials of these commissions are to guide and control spring tilling preparations in their specified enterprise or village during a minimum of 10 days before the day of preparation.
3. The results of examination on the day of preparation (defects and measures for overcoming them) are to be recorded, and the resulting report is to be signed by all members of the commission.
4. The officials of the commissions are to personally guide and control measures for overcoming defects.
5. The day of preparation is to close with farmers' meetings and cultural functions, to which delegations from sponsorship enterprises, which have assisted on that day, as well as the entire village populace, are to be invited.

XII. CULTIVATION PLAN CONTROL AND REPORT

1. The Bezirk councils, in the light of local growing conditions in individual Bezirke, are to establish uniform periods at least once a month for "Plan Control Days." Cultivation Plan controls are to be coordinated with field checks, whereby crop status can be judged at the same time.
2. Results of plan controls are to be evaluated in farmers' meetings and in Bezirk and Kreis council meetings. Bezirk and Kreis council officials are to take measures to eliminate obstacles in the plan and to supervise plan execution.
3. Reports on spring tilling and cultivation work will be regulated by an order of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry by 15 February 1956.

Grotewohl
Premier

The Council of Ministers of the GDR

Reichelt
Minister of Agriculture and Forestry

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